



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative David Stringer (R-1)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Representative David Stringer Named Chair of Ad Hoc Study Committee on Criminal Justice Reform

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Representative David Stringer (R-1) today was named chair of the newly-formed Ad Hoc Study Committee on Criminal Justice Reform by Speaker J.D. Mesnard (R-17).

The committee will investigate the root causes of Arizona's incarceration rate and issues related to prisoner reentry that contribute to recidivism. Representative Tony Rivero (R-21) has been named vice-chair, and other members of the committee are Representatives Ben Toma (R-22), Kirsten Engel (D-10), and Tony Navarrete (D-30).

The committee will immediately begin work with an organizational meeting on Wednesday, June 6, 2018 at 2:30 p.m. in House Hearing Room 1. The committee will meet twice monthly over the next six months at the State Capitol. All meetings will be open to the public.

According to the United States Department of Justice, [Arizona currently has the 4th highest imprisonment rate in the nation](#) and a recidivism rate that is above the national average. The incarceration of roughly 40,000 prisoners in the state prison system costs Arizona taxpayers nearly \$1.1 billion per year, or roughly 11% of the state budget. This is a higher percentage than all but a handful of states.

"Public safety is the first duty of government," said Representative Stringer. **"Yet Arizona's prisons house many non-violent, low level offenders who need mental health and substance abuse treatment. Only a small percentage of these prisoners actually receive treatment while incarcerated. We need to look at more cost-effective ways of dealing with this population to facilitate their reentry into society and reduce recidivism."**

"When criminal justice reform is done right, it can reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, save taxpayer money, and improve victims' rights all while ensuring that those that break laws are held accountable," said Representative Rivero. **"I look forward to working**

with Representative Stringer and my colleagues on this ad hoc committee to discuss ways in which Arizona can implement favorable reforms to our criminal justice system.”

The formation of the ad hoc committee is an outgrowth of work begun last session by Representatives Stringer and Engel through a bipartisan study group on criminal justice that met weekly for informal discussion with prosecutors, public defenders, and other stakeholders.

Establishing the Ad Hoc Study Committee on Criminal Justice Reform will allow legislators to expand their efforts by accessing the staff assistance and research capabilities of the House of Representatives. The committee will also consult with subject matter experts in criminal justice from the Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law, as well as a broad spectrum of organizations that have successfully promoted reforms in other states including the American Conservative Union's Committee on Criminal Justice Reform, Right on Crime, the Charles Koch Foundation, Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), and the American Friend's Service Committee.

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CONTACT:

Matthew Specht
Director of Communications
House Republican Caucus
602-926-5518
mspecht@azleg.gov